

New driving laws

According to the German auto club ADAC, new driving laws may take effect in 2006.

Changes will require motorists to drive with suitable winter equipment, especially tires. Violations will cost €20. Violations that impede the flow of traffic will cost €40.

Starting in April, Germany may get two new traffic signs. One will indicate that lights are needed in tunnels and u-turns in tunnels are not allowed; the other regulates the use emergency stop areas.

Fines are being raised when drivers fail to maintain a safe distance from the vehicle in front of them (tailgating), when cargo is secured correctly, and for misconduct at railroad crossings. The initial fine is €150 and violators receive a one-month suspension of driving privileges. Additional incidents bring a €250 fine and a three-month suspension.

Starting April 15 in Austria, motorists driving during the day without lights will be fined €15. Toll stickers are required for driving in Austria and Switzerland. Those without a sticker in Austria will be fined €120; in Switzerland the fine is €65 in addition to the cost of the sticker.

Attend SAEDA training

Subversion And Espionage Directed against Americans (SAEDA) training will be conducted by the 66th Military Intelligence Group in coordination with the USAG Grafenwoehr DPTMS (security division) Feb. 10 in Grafenwoehr and Vilseck. Times and location are: Vilseck (Post Theater) – from 1 – 2:30 p.m. for US personnel, 2:30 – 4 p.m. for local nationals. Grafenwoehr (Tower Theater) – from 9 to 10:30 a.m. for US personnel, 10:30 a.m. to noon for local nationals.

Graf CMR, APO moves

Central Mail Room (CMR) 415 and the Army Post Office in Grafenwoehr will be closed Feb. 24 to move to its new facility, bldg. 141, adjacent to the Graf commissary. The CMR staff requests all patrons empty their mail boxes and pick up all packages prior to Feb. 24 to make the move as easy as possible.

POSH training

All civilian personnel in the Installation Management Agency-Europe Region, to include military service members that supervise civilian employees, must complete Prevention of Sexual Harassment refresher training for FY 2006. All new employees that have not taken the initial classroom training must do so prior to taking this on-line course. To schedule initial POSH training, please contact Ms. Josie Hammond at 475-7215 or e-mail josie.hammond@us.army.mil. To take the on-line POSH training, go to: <http://training.newmedialearning.com/psh/usarmy-mae/message.htm>

Vilseck tax program

The Vilseck Law Office, located in bldg. 245, recently opened its tax assistance center and now accepts appointments and walk-ins. Appointments are offered Monday to Friday from 8:30 to 10 a.m. Walk-ins are allowed Monday to Friday from 1 to 4 p.m. Call 476-3316 or 09662-83-3316 to make an appointment and ask what documents you need to bring.

Father-Daughter dance

Grafenwoehr's Protestant Women of the Chapel sponsors a Father-Daughter Dance at the Tower View Restaurant Feb. 16 from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. All girls in the community are invited and girls whose father is not able to attend can be paired with a "substitute dad." There is no cost for this community outreach event, though those who want to attend should RSVP by Feb. 9 to Kelly Black at e-mail jkblack@hotmail.com (specify father-daughter dance in the subject line) or to Martina Bias, 09646-808965 (please leave a message).

Who's your buddy?

Soldiers can earn \$1,000 for referring acquaintances to Army recruiters should those referrals result in an enlistment. Under the referral program, members of Army regular and reserve components may receive a \$1,000 bonus per recruit. Soldiers may refer anyone except a member of their immediate family. The bonus will be paid in a lump sum once the qualified applicant completes Basic and Advanced Individual Training (AIT). There are no retroactive provisions, officials said. Payments will be made to the referring Soldier's military pay account 45 days after the person that was referred completes AIT. For more information, go to <https://www.usarec.army.mil/smart/> or call 1-800-223-3735, ext. 6-0473.

Your LES is online

As of Feb. 28, hard-copy leave and earning statements will be a thing of the past. Military members and their families must now access myPay to view their LES.

Bavarian News

Vol. 2 Nr. 3

Grafenwoehr, Hohenfels and Vilseck

February 8, 2006

‘La Mafia’ warms Hohenfels



Photos by Amanda Atchley

by Maddy Vernieu

Hohenfels' residents were treated to the exceptional musical delights of the Grammy Award-winning band La Mafia Jan. 25.

The Texas-based Tejano music sensations sang their way into the hearts of their Hohenfels listeners. Their upbeat music enticed many onto the dance floor and, later, onto the stage as the band allowed a few brave souls to sing with the professionals.

"I really love this music," said Debora Apodaca. "I just can't believe a singing group like this came to Hohenfels."

Debora's opinion was shared by many, including her husband Staff Sgt. Miguel Apodaca.

"We are such as small post and this is a big deal for everyone, especially Mexican Americans," Apodaca said.

La Mafia's blend of Tex-Mex country music electrified with modern pop is a big hit with people from all walks of life. "I enjoy this music enormously," said Trevor P. Jackman, Army Community Services director. "I used to live in the Houston area during a military assignment and that's when I became familiar with this particular style of music".

La Mafia's performance provided a much-needed hiatus from the freezing weather by spicing up this January evening. "This (is) a great break from doing report cards," said Vicki Krouse, sixth-grade teacher at Hohenfels Elementary School. "But as soon as this is over I'll get back into it."

No bullies allowed Area schools attune to prevention, response

by Jim Hughes
USAG Ansbach

There are children out there who dread going to school every day, and not because of a big test or an antagonistic teacher.

They dread school because they are being terrorized by a bully.

In the wake of the Columbine (Colo.) High School shooting and other incidents of school violence, bullying at learning institutions has received increased focus in the U.S. and Department of Defense Dependents Schools-Europe.

As of last year, 17 states have anti-bullying legislation in effect and others are considering it, according to Associated Press news reports.

It would be naive to think that bullying never goes on at a particular school, but what is important is how students, parents and school systems respond to incidents, said Michael Priser, school psychologist at Vilseck High School.

To keep bullying from becoming a problem,

area schools invite Priser to make his "How to Deal With and Prevent Bullying" presentation to teachers, staff and parents.

"The DoDDS policy is zero tolerance on bullying. If anyone at the school sees that a child's behavior is affecting another child, then we will interfere and provide assistance to the children involved—victim and bully," he said. "Being kids, there are always going to be times when playfulness gets out of hand, but it's not a major problem here. Our goal is for kids to be happy and secure, and to develop academically and socially."

But it is a problem in many school systems, Priser said. He cited an American Medical Association study that indicated more than 3.7 million U.S. youths engage in and more than 3.2 million are victims of moderate or serious bullying each year.

The stakes are high in preventing bullying. Priser said that being either a bully or a victim is linked with school drop out, poor psychoso-

cial adjustment, criminal activity and other negative long-term consequences.

"Bullying has always been there. It just hasn't always been addressed," Priser said. "Sometimes a kid will make a derogatory remark about another child in the hallway and staff members will choose to do nothing. The message to everyone involved—bully, victim and bystanders—is the kid has gotten away with it and therefore it must be an OK thing to do. We can't afford to be doing that because we are sending the wrong message and the situation will escalate."

"Research has shown that one-fifth of these students that have been bullies end up incarcerated, so if we don't deal with it early on, we are not doing a service to that student, the victim or the taxpayers."

There are things schools can do to deal with bullying, Priser said.

See 'Bullies', page 3

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Kids ski – Page 13



Spa soothes souls – Page 4

Q&A

What does Black History Month mean to you?



Spc. Justin Banister
"It's like how everything has changed from slavery days until now. There are still some problems, but it has improved."



Spc. Raharmon Nelson
"Black people should be more conscious to the freedoms that we have achieved through the civil rights movement and to use those freedoms to better our culture."



Spc. Arden Farrell
"It represents the social change and the difference between how black people lived before, during, and after slavery."



Tara George
"Truthfully, I think we should study history all year long."



Susann Robinson
"It's important to educate people so they understand that we are all one, not just black and white, but different nationalities, too."



1st Sgt. Leonard Kuhlenschmidt
"It's an opportunity for everyone of all backgrounds to appreciate black history and culture."



Angie Perez
"It provides us an opportunity to reflect on how far we've come as a society and reminds us to keep working towards equality."



Prof. James Palombo
"It underscores the importance of the rights discussion regarding freedom, equality, and opportunities."

Compiled by Kathy Jordan
Bavarian News

Commentary

‘Thoughts while moving around’
RED roads, ACAP, and skating on ice

by Col. Brian T. Boyle
USAG Grafenwoehr Commander

It's hard to imagine where the time has gone – we are already into February. Fasching is now taking place and I invite all to participate in the season with our German hosts.

Without further ado, off to recent community happenings:

RED Roads – About two weeks ago Grafenwoehr-Vilseck experienced snow throughout the day. That night, with advice from the military police, we changed road conditions to RED and delayed school opening for two hours. Hohenfels experiences these conditions all the time and reacts well to them.

While most people in Grafenwoehr-Vilseck understood what we meant, I want to spend some time on this subject to ensure all understand.

Once roads go RED, only emergency and mission essential vehicles will travel. You might ask what "mission essential vehicles" are. Each organization has a list of vehicles and people who are mission essential and they know they are required to travel to work. This generally means they leave earlier in order to make it to work on time.

With respect to the garrison, I have a lot of mission essential personnel. Workers in the Child Development Center, the dining facility, the Directorate of Logistics, the Directorate of Public Works and others are required to come to work on time to open the post and allow the community to use the services. In fact, I expect all other workers to plan accordingly and arrive at

work as close as possible to normally scheduled hours.

With respect to delaying school for two hours, we did not delay opening the post. That meant that we planned to have the post open when you arrived.

If you do not work for the garrison, please consult with your unit to determine your travel requirements when we declare RED roads.

ACAP (Army Career Alumni Program) – Though we continue to move Soldiers to and from the community, deploy and redeploy units and individual augmentees, and are preparing for the arrival of a large body of new Soldiers this summer, we have some Soldiers who have reached the end of their career. These Soldiers are required to go through ACAP, the Army Career Alumni Program.

This program is designed to ease the transition for Soldiers to the civilian workplace. I ask all commanders to fully support this program and take care of our Soldiers before they depart the Army.

Cathy Banks is the new ACAP manager for Vilseck and Grafenwoehr. She can be contacted at 476-2055. Dynamic, full of vim and vigor,



Col. Brian Boyle

Cathy helps Soldiers get ready for the civilian market. She can run unit pre-separation briefings in addition to the normally scheduled briefings she runs. And she will work with Soldiers to process required paperwork, including Form 2648 that must be filled out 90 days before separation.

I encourage all Soldiers getting ready to retire to take advantage of this program because, frankly, you've earned it.

Skating – With the recent cold snap, I heard rumors of children and adults wanting to skate on local ponds and lakes. I remind you that in the Grafenwoehr and Vilseck area, only Pfarrweiher (Grafenwoehr) and Big Mike Lake (Vilseck) are authorized for skating or other outdoor events on frozen water.

Mike Schwarz and the rest of the Grafenwoehr Safety office verify ice thickness and determine when it is safe for people to travel on the ice. When it is safe, they will raise a blue flag. Parents need to pass this guidance on to your children so we don't suffer a needless tragedy.

Stryker Brigade arrival – This past week, the 3rd Brigade of the 1st Infantry Division and USAG Grafenwoehr sponsored a fact-finding mission by members of the Stryker Brigade. We spent many hours answering their detailed questions and now feel more confident that we can really welcome them to Germany.

It really will be a busy summer, but we in the garrison continue to work to make the entire area the best place to live and work in Germany.

Soldier losses caused by high-risk behavior

by Gen. David D. McKiernan
Commander, U.S. Army, Europe

Several of our Soldiers recently died or were severely injured as a result of their high-risk behavior while off duty. Many of the Soldiers were suffering from stress or had a reputation for taking risks. In most of these cases, their leaders or battle buddies were aware that they needed help, but did not intervene effectively enough to prevent their loss.

The Army's Warrior Ethos states that we must never leave a fallen comrade. We must live by these words, both on and off the battlefield. This is especially important now while we are at war. Soldiers and their families are faced today with several stressors that can lead to negative attitudes and feelings, including alienation, bitterness, depression, grief, guilt, low self-esteem, rage and self-pity. These feelings are fertile ground for the growth of problems such as alcohol abuse, drug use, spouse or child abuse, and acts of violence.

During the last 3 years, reported cases of drug use, family violence, financial problems and in-

cidents of anger and aggression have all increased in the Army in Europe. In addition, our fatality rate has risen very alarmingly over the past few months.

We are leaving fallen comrades behind. We must take steps to reverse this trend.

Leaders – Spend time with your Soldiers, on duty as well as off, so that you understand their personal challenges and sources of stress. Increase your awareness of your Soldiers' activities and intervene quickly to modify risky behavior. Make sure your Soldiers and other leaders in your unit are aware of all available counseling services. Refer Soldiers who exhibit suicidal behavior to a chaplain, to those who show potential for child or spouse abuse to a local social worker or to a



Gen. McKiernan

family advocacy counselor, and those exhibiting signs of alcohol abuse to the Army Substance Abuse Program (ASAP) so that they can get help. These are just a few examples of the many services available to help Soldiers and their families. Your caring leadership will make a difference.

Soldiers – Always use the buddy system. Make it your priority to check on your battle buddies in the barracks or at home. If they are in trouble, maintain contact with them. **Many tragedies have been prevented simply because someone took time to listen.** If a problem is too big for you to handle, seek the help of your leaders. The care we show our fellow Soldiers both on and off duty sets our profession apart from others. The Army is a family; take care of your Army family as you would your own.

As the Global War on Terrorism continues, we can expect more deployments, family separations, and other challenges. It is therefore essential that we remain vigilant and sensitive to those around us and take action to prevent high-risk behavior from resulting in tragedy.

Take a stand, lend a hand, stop bullying now

Health Resources and Services Administration
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

A lot of young people have a good idea of what bullying is because they see it every day.

Bullying happens when someone hurts or scares another person on purpose and the person being bullied has a hard time defending him or herself. Usually, bullying happens over and over. Examples include:

- Punching, shoving and other acts that hurt people physically;
- Spreading bad rumors about people;
- Keeping certain people out of a group;
- Teasing people in a mean way;
- Getting certain people to "gang up" on others.

Unfortunately, not everyone takes bullying seriously, including adults. This is one of the main reasons that the Youth Expert Panel has worked alongside the representatives of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and the Maternal and Child Health Bureau to develop "Take a Stand. Lend a Hand. Stop Bullying Now!" campaign. Check it out at <http://stopbullyingnow.hrsa.gov>

Identifying a bully:

The National Parent Teacher Association gives these tips on behaviors to look out for when identifying bullies:

Concrete behaviors:

- Name calling
- Rumor spreading
- Making up stories to get other children in trouble
- Telling other children not to be friends with a target child
- Hitting, kicking, tripping or pushing another child
- Teasing other children and making remarks about their culture, religion, ethnicity, weight, physical appearance, disabilities or medical conditions
- Intimidating others
- Taking other children's possessions or demanding money from them
- Damaging other children's property
- Bossiness
- Hiding other children's books, bags or other property

- Picking on other children, even when they're upset
- Making threats to other children
- Manipulating others, getting them to do things that they may not want to do

Attitudinal signs:

- Hot tempered and quick to anger
- Impulsive – acts without thinking or considering the consequences of his or her behavior
- Low tolerance to frustration
- Difficulty conforming to rules
- Needs to dominate and subdue others
- Brags about his or her superiority over other students
- Aggressive towards adults
- Good at talking themselves out of situations
- Little empathy – has difficulty understanding others' perspectives and feelings
- Engages in anti-social behavior (stealing, vandalism, substance abuse)
- Enjoys putting down others
- Treats animals cruelly
- Disrespects authority
- Enjoys fighting
- Refuses to admit fear

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Grafenwoehr • Hohenfels • Vilseck

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College Night opens doors to education

by **Kathy Jordan**
Bavarian News

College Night is a fact-filled setting where students from middle and high school grades get a one-on-one opportunity to talk with alumni of various educational institutions. More than 250 people participated in the event held at Vilseck Middle High School Jan. 25.

College nights often help students determine what their next step will be in the educational arena.

The local two-hour event helps students by listening to alumni and make choices that suit their needs. Forty-one institutions of higher learning took part in College Night.

Some students see this as an opportunity to get a head start on their educational goals.

“If I get an early start and learn about the colleges, it may help me get admitted early to the college of my choice. It could give me a jump start over other kids who did not attend,” said Vilseck High School junior Erick Arroyo.

For the past four years, senior Jules Allen has been attending

college night to find information and gather brochures from prospective colleges.

“You get a lot of information about things you really can’t get on the internet. You can also talk to people that attended the school. Sometimes that can help answer questions you may have about a particular college,” Allen said.

College night also gives those who attend more than one option when considering their educational goals, in case things in their lives take a sudden turn.

“I already applied to two colleges. If for some reason I don’t get accepted or my parents move or deploy somewhere else, I may need to find an alternate college. Being so far away from the states you don’t hear about smaller colleges or some bigger colleges or actually talk to people who attended them. This event helps with those types of things,” senior Ashley Campbell said.

About 15 to 20 kids from Vilseck’s teen center attended college night to learn about the education process. Though many were too young to be considering college, teen center worker

Sakeeta Lewis explained the importance of having the teens attend the event.

“This opens up that avenue to learning at an early age. Some of them think they are too young and I tell them you are never too young to start thinking about what you want to do in life. If they start finding things out now, then they won’t be like that hurried senior trying to figure out what they need to do next. Start planning now instead of waiting,” Lewis said.

Classes are in the works to help students and parents work through the paperwork and finances for students preparing to attend educational institutions.

“On Feb. 15 is a class at noon at the high school to help parents finance their child’s education. On Feb. 16 there’s a class at the teen center geared toward students about things like selecting and applying to colleges,” said school liaison officer Steve Vojtecky.

For more information on upcoming events contact Vilseck Middle High School at 476-2554 or 09662-832554.

News Briefs

World Cup volunteers

The World Cup office in Kaiserslautern is providing an English language volunteer application for anyone interested in participating in this year’s World Cup activities in Kaiserslautern. Anyone who wishes to be considered for a volunteer position should apply. Share this with others who might have the time and interest to take part. The application may be downloaded from: <http://web2.kaiserslautern.de/wm2006/gastgeber/freiwillige/index.html?lang=en>

7th ATC has new name

Effective immediately, the 7th Army Training Command is called the 7th Army Joint Multinational Training Command (JMTC). As part of the unit transformation, the Combat Maneuver Training Center is now called the Joint Multinational Readiness Center.

Road closure

Due to area renovations, a road closure at building 226 in Vilseck is now underway. The renovation will affect the surrounding streets and the road closure is expected to last until April or May.

Second Hand Mojo

Mark your calendars for the popular German-American group Second Hand Mojo (a blues band) that will perform at Yesterdays in Vilseck on Saturday, Feb. 18, from 9 p.m. to midnight. The performance will also serve as a special dedication to one of the band members who is deploying.

24/7 dental care

After-hours, weekend, and holiday emergency dental care is now available in Grafenwoehr and Vilseck. A dentist, now on-call 24/7, will return your call and speak to you about dental emergencies. Active duty and family members have access to after-hour emergency dental care by calling the local military police station. In Grafenwoehr: 475-8319 or 09641-83-8319; in Vilseck: 476-2490 or 09662-83-2490.

Self-defense for women

A woman’s self-defense class is held every second Saturday of the month in bldg. 221, from 1-4 p.m. Cost is \$36 and the class is for adults only. For more information call 476-2214/2998 or 09641-929769.

Vilseck storytime

Preschool story time at the Vilseck library is held every Wednesday morning at 10 a.m. Stories and crafts for preschoolers are featured. For more information contact Karen Beck at 476-1740.

Trouble readjusting?

Are you having difficulties readjusting after your deployment? Are you drinking too much, having arguments with your family and friends? You might want to check out “Seeking Safety – Repairing the Armor,” a series of classes to help you learn coping skills. Contact Amy Parke, Social Work Services, 476-2100 or 09662-83-2100, for more information.

Expectant mom classes

Active duty and civilian mothers-to-be can sign up for classes offered by health clinics in Vilseck and Grafenwoehr. Registration is the first Friday of each month from 9 to 10:30 a.m. in building 225, Vilseck Health Clinic annex classroom. Bring your medical records to the registration. Contact the clinics for more information.

by **Ann Erickson**
Army News Service

The Army is short about 100 physician assistants and is recruiting both civilians and Soldiers to do the job.

This is the first time that the Army Medical Department, or AMEDD, has recruited certified civilian physician assistants to join the Army, said Capt. James Jones, Interservice Physician Assistant Program (IPAP) manager. He said the Army’s modularity and high operations tempo contributed to this change.

“We have a recruiting mission to obtain 20 civilian physician assistants this year, but this is likely to rise to 60,” he said.

The Army offers qualified officers, warrant officers and enlisted Soldiers an educational opportunity to become a physician assistant through the IPAP located at the AMEDD Center and School, Fort Sam Houston, Texas. The Army trains alongside candidates from the Air

Force, Navy, Coast Guard, U.S. Army Reserve, National Guard, and U.S. Public Health Service, said IPAP officials.

“The Army plans on filling the shortages by increasing the number of students in the IPAP – this year we are training 92 Army students versus 60,” Jones said.

Upon completion of the program, graduates earn a master’s degree from the University of Nebraska and receive a commission in the Army Medical Specialist Corps as a second lieutenant. Officer students receive constructive credit for their commissioned service in accordance with DOD Instruction 6000.13.

Graduates must pass the Physician Assistant National Certifying Exam before they can provide healthcare to Soldiers, AMEDD officials said.

There is also a new program called the Requirements Completion Course that is designed to help Soldiers complete the program’s prereq-

uisite courses.

“This is another way that we are working to reduce the shortages while still maintaining the highest quality medical provider possible,” Jones said.

Army physician assistants are frontline medical responders, Jones added.

“They are usually the first medical care that Soldiers receive before being transported to a hospital,” he said. “They are a critical component of the Army.”

Applications for the IPAP must be sent by March 1 to the program manager at:

HQ, USAREC
RCHS-SVD-PA
1307 Third Ave.
Fort Knox, KY 40121-2726

For more information about Army physician assistants or the IPAP and its requirements, visit: www.usarec.army.mil/armypa/

Bullies

from page 1

“You need a comprehensive approach and a buy-in from the entire school – teachers, staff



Jim Hughes

Michael Priser, school psychologist at Vilseck High School, presents “How to Deal With and Prevent Bullying” at Rainbow Elementary School in Ansbach Jan. 13.

and students, and the community – the parents,” he said. “People need to know what bullying is. A lot of people don’t have a clue. They look at bullying as when you beat someone up or call them something really bad. They don’t look at other subtle forms of bullying like gestures, intimidation, exclusion and so forth.

“You need a program that deals directly with bullying and follows through on consequences that involve teachers, administrators and parents so bullies know the behavior is not appropriate and will not be tolerated. Channel the bullies in the right direction and have a program that helps the victim.

“You also need to deal with bystanders so they’re not allowing bullying to occur,” Priser added. “If all of the children know bullying is not acceptable, then it’s

‘You need a comprehensive approach and a buy-in from the entire school – teachers, staff and students, and the community – the parents.’

fewer bullying problems than others, and that when issues arise they are dealt with effectively.

“I worked in a large urban school in Seattle and we had bullying problems,” he said. “The difference between there and here is like night and day. I’m really impressed with the DODDS system. DODDS has more resources and more support

OK for the students to step in and say, ‘Hey, we don’t do that at this school.’ Not doing something is not acceptable and that needs to be the climate of this school.”

Priser said that DODDS-E parents should rest easy knowing that the school systems here face

than other school systems, more services and more staffing. There are problems, but they are nothing like I dealt with in Seattle.”

Warrior feels Trudeau book helps amputees

by **Genevieve Billia**
Army News Service

Gary Trudeau, nationally syndicated comic artist and political satirist, signed copies of his new Doonesbury book “The Long Road Home” at the Pentagon concourse Jan. 31.

Among the Soldiers waiting in line to have their book signed was one in a wheelchair who lost his leg in Iraq.

Trudeau’s book tells the story of a long-established Doonesbury character, B.D., and his experiences as a National Guard Soldier deployed to Iraq, where he loses a leg in a rocket-propelled grenade attack outside of Fallujah.

Spc. Joseph Kashnow, 4th Infantry Division, Fort Carson, Colo., lost his leg after being wounded in Taji, Iraq, in September 2003.

“I think it’s great that there’s a cartoon character that’s in this situation. It will help Soldiers that have been wounded, not just amputees, get the attention they deserve,” Kashnow said, acknowledging Trudeau’s efforts to bring the injured Soldier to the national platform.

The sentiment seemed mutual within the crowd gathered to have their books signed by Trudeau.

“It’s a great idea. I mean, these kids are giving up a lot. We can’t forget about them,” said

Master Sgt. David Gagnon.

The majority of the book’s action takes place during the recovery period that takes B.D. from



John Reese

Life imitates art as Spc. Joseph Kashnow meets political satirist Gary Trudeau at a book signing in the Pentagon concourse Jan. 31.

Landstuhl Regional Medical Center in Germany to Walter Reed Army Medical Center and finally home, where he learns to cope with his injury through the help of his family and a counseling staff.

While B.D. recovers from his combat injury, his wife, Boopsie, stays at the Fisher House. Fisher House is an organization that provides “comfort homes” near major military and VA medical centers where family members may stay while their loved one is recovering.

Fisher House originally asked Trudeau for a compilation of cartoons he created that were part of B.D.’s story line as a morale booster, and he did one better. Trudeau published the compilation book and then pledged his book advance and all the profits that would result from the publishing to Fisher House.

The publisher, Andrews McMeel Publishing, has also donated a portion of the firm’s proceeds to Fisher House. Trudeau plans to publish a second Doonesbury compilation focusing on B.D. later this year, again donating his advance and profits to Fisher House.

While conducting research for his work, Trudeau worked very closely with Fisher House, as well as the patients at Walter Reed Medical Center.

Stress simply slips away at ACS spa

Participants claim ‘a little breathing time’

Photos and article by Alice Adler
Bavarian News

Hohenfels’ Hilltop Chapel Center was transformed into another world the evening of Jan. 20 – a quieter, peaceful world.

Candles in every corner, lights twinkling in potted plants, and a roaring fire that beckoned visitors to sit near its hearth. Chocolates, jasmine tea and fruit smoothies laid in wait.

An evening of pampering and relaxation was in store for every woman who attended the Army Community Service Stress Spa.

Some arrived in sweatpants and pajamas; others changed from heavy winter boots to slippers. As they curled up on pillows near the fire, spa organizer Karen Armstead said, “From the response I got I could tell that a lot of people need a little breathing time.”

And that’s what they got.

After a short introduction, the group learned basic yoga philosophy and movements from Maria ReGester, who also discussed dietary considerations, meditation, breathing practice and yoga poses, called asanas.

ReGester guided the group through a series of asanas, reinforcing proper positioning and breathing. She encouraged attendees to do only what was comfortable for them.

“Yoga,” she emphasized, “is not competitive.”

Participants next learned how to give – and get – neck and shoulder massages from masseuse Carrie Anderson. When everyone was relaxed, Jacque Cummings led them through guided imagery relaxation techniques.

“This time is for you, just for you,” she said.

Afterwards, members of the group lingered about, chatting, relaxing, and snacking. Most also received foot massages from Niesha Porter.

They went home with specially-made journals, stress balls to squeeze and a book of information on stress and relaxation compiled by organizers Armstead and Tracie West.

This is the second year the ACS Stress Spa has been offered. Armstead and West said response to the class was overwhelming.

“I had soooo many phone calls,” said West.

A lengthy waiting list for the limited number of seats indicated to West that more spa sessions are in demand.

“We may do it twice a year,” she said.



Yoga instructor Maria ReGester, left, talks to spa participants who are relaxing in the yoga pose known as “Savasana.”

Participants had nothing but praise for the evening.

“It was absolutely wonderful,” said Lynn Griffin. “We want to do it again.”

“It was fantastic,” said Robyn Hill, adding the neck and shoulder massage was her favorite part.

“The yoga was really interesting. I’ve never been to anything like this before,” Angela Griffin said.



Are Valentine chocolates part of food pyramid?

Moderation key for sinfully sweet, pure pleasure food

by Kay Blakley
DeCA Europe Consumer Advocate

Just when you’ve settled into a comfortable healthy eating routine, along comes another observance that calls for something many dieters view as forbidden food – sinfully delicious chocolate!

Healthy eating experts assure us there’s a place for all foods in a balanced diet. By making most choices from low calorie/high nutrient foods, it is possible to make room for some occasional treats while staying close to your allotted calorie requirements. If you overdo it a bit calorie-wise, be sure to add another 30 minutes or more to your physical activity routine, and things are sure to equal out.

After all, what kind of life would it be without chocolate? This comfort food has been central to human life about as far back as history can take us. Some of the earliest known chocolate drinkers, for example, were the ancient Mayans of Central America. In the late 1700s, the people of Madrid, Spain, consumed nearly 12 million pounds of chocolate a year. Today, even though we Americans have a long-standing love affair with anything chocolate, and we savor at least 3.3 billion pounds of it each year, we miss being the top consumer by a long shot. Switzerland, where consumption stands at more than 24 pounds per person per year leads the pack.

Even Casanova is said to have been a chocolate devotee, believing it had a positive bearing on his amorous pursuits. And, that might be one of the many reasons why exchanging chocolates on Valentine’s Day is still firmly entrenched in our culture today.

You may be surprised to learn that chocolate, especially milk chocolate, does contain a few nutrients. A 1.5 ounce milk chocolate bar has about 3 grams of protein, 15 percent of the recommended Daily Value (DV) for riboflavin, 9 percent DV for calcium, and 7 percent DV for iron. But it’s still a “pure pleasure” food, so moderation is the key. Choose the highest quality chocolate, and make it the one that pleases your taste buds the best.

When cooking with chocolate, be aware that different kinds of chocolate impart different characteristics in the finished product. Unsweetened chocolate, for example, is pure chocolate “liquor” that has been cooled and formed into bars. Semisweet or bittersweet chocolate must contain a minimum of 35 percent chocolate liquor, but may have as much as 70 percent, plus

added sugar. Milk chocolate must contain at least 10 percent chocolate liquor and 12 percent milk solids, plus added sugar.

Substitutions are possible, but for best results choose a recipe from a reliable source, and use the ingredients called for. Follow the instructions well, especially when melting the chocolate. Chocolate burns easily and has a nasty habit of tightening or “seizing” instead of melting smoothly. A drop of moisture from condensation or from using a less than perfectly dry container can cause chocolate to seize, turning it into a blob resembling dark brown cement. The condition can sometimes be remedied by stirring in a bit of solid fat such as butter or shortening, assuming your recipe can accommodate the additional fat. Otherwise, the only choice is to try again with a fresh batch of chocolate. Don’t let this caution scare you away. Cooking with chocolate is well worth the effort.

Whether you purchase a box of ready-made Valentine chocolates, choose to save some calories with the Be Good Brownies recipe below, or go whole-hog with the full-fat, full-flavor One Bowl Brownies, be sure to save some cash by making your purchases at the commissary.

Happy Valentine’s Day!

Be Good Brownies

(Makes 16, 2x2-inch squares)

3 oz. unsweetened chocolate
1 cup granulated sugar
¾ cup flour
¾ cup low-fat cottage cheese
3 egg whites
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
¼ teaspoon salt
Powdered sugar
Sliced almonds for garnish

Directions:

Heat oven to 350°F. Melt chocolate squares in small heavy bottom pan over very low heat; set aside to cool. Alternately, microwave chocolate in microwaveable bowl on high for 2 minutes; stir until chocolate is completely melted; set aside to cool. In food processor, puree all ingredients, except chocolate and powdered sugar, until smooth. Add melted chocolate. Blend well. Pour into lightly greased, 8-inch square pan. Bake 20 to 25 minutes, or until just set. Cool in pan on wire

rack. Sprinkle with powdered sugar. Cut into squares and garnish with sliced almonds.

Note: If you don’t have a food processor, an electric mixer, at high speed, will work. The batter just won’t be completely smooth.

Baker’s One Bowl Brownies

(Makes 24, 2x2” squares)

4 squares unsweetened baking chocolate
¾ cup butter or margarine (1 ½ sticks)
2 cups sugar
3 eggs
1 teaspoon vanilla
1 cup flour
1 cup coarsely chopped pecans or walnuts (optional)
2 squares semi-sweet baking chocolate melted (optional)

Directions:

Microwave unsweetened chocolate and butter in large microwavable bowl on HIGH 2 minutes, or until butter is melted. Stir until chocolate is completely melted.

Stir in sugar. Add eggs and vanilla; mix well. Add flour and pecans or walnuts; stir until well blended. Spread into greased foil-lined 13x9-inch baking pan.

Bake at 350°F for 30 to 35 minutes or until toothpick inserted in center comes out with “fudgy” crumbs. DO NOT OVER-BAKE. Cool in pan. Lift out of pan onto cutting board. Cut into 24 squares. Drizzle each square with melted semi-sweet chocolate, if desired. Let stand until set.

For cake-like brownies, prepare as directed, stirring in ½ cup milk with the eggs and vanilla, and increasing the flour to 1 ½ cups.



On the road with Vilseck MPs

Ever-present paperwork, rotating shifts, many miles challenge America's finest

Story and photos by Shannon Hill
Bavarian News

Preparing for a day with a dispatch military policeman, commonly called MPs, I was hesitant, uncertain what to expect.

Would it be an exciting, danger-filled day? Would there be a car chase? Would there be any arrests that I'd later be called upon to testify as a witness? Or would the day be a series of frequent stops at the shoppette for doughnuts and coffee?

Realistically, I knew these hypotheses would be unlikely, but didn't have any idea what would happen during the course of the day.

Then I met my MPs – New York native Spc. David McConnon, and a trainee from the Ohio National Guard, Spc. Lucas Turpin.

What did they have in store for me?

Arriving at the Vilseck MP station, McConnon and Turpin asked me to have a seat. As the interview started, it was immediately interrupted by the need to take witness statements from an incident the previous night.

"It'll be about 20 minutes," McConnon assured. "We just need to get them to fill out these 2823s."

Taking a statement

Form 2823 is an investigator statement, and must be completed following any event requiring MP interaction. The witness writes down, in great detail, a description of the incident and then answers any questions the MP might ask regarding the situation.

People sometimes embellish or leave items out of their statement. According to McConnon, getting it right is one of the inherent responsibilities of an MP.

"You gotta be able to see and state the obvious," he said.

After explaining the process to the witness and leaving them under other supervision, McConnon returned.

Question: How does a typical day for an MP begin?

Answer: A typical day starts with the ever-present paperwork, including a patrol report and a vehicle inspection sheet.

The vehicle inspection sheet has to be completed prior to and at the end of every shift. It details any problems that the MP vehicle might previously have had, and any that might occur while on duty. MPs must also have hand receipts for any possible tickets given, and a radar unit.

MPs have the option of using a handheld radar unit or one that is built into most of MP vehicles. A popular misconception about the radar unit is that once having passed a police vehicle, the MPs are no longer be able to gauge the speed of a passing motorist. Consequently, drivers often speed up after passing the MPs.

However, radar units currently in use by the MPs can track the speed of a vehicle coming toward or away from them, and if they catch someone pulling the old speed-up trick, the MPs are liable to turn around, pull you over, and hand out a speeding ticket.

MPs are equipped with more than a radar unit. They wear a large black MP brassard on their sleeve over their uniform. They all carry a Baretta 9mm pistol (called 9 Mikes) with two 10-round clips and an MP baton, just in case a physical altercation erupts in their travels. MPs must qualify with their weapon every 90 days.

All MP vehicles have flashlights, and in the back are road flares, first aid kits, and latex gloves.

McConnon, a former civilian policeman, carries latex gloves on his equipment belt, along with his personal cell phone and handcuffs.

The radios in the vehicles blare MP dispatches, and most MPs carry radios on their belts. While optional, McConnon, and about 95 percent of all other MPs, carries his cell phone just in case something serious happens. He said he prefers to keep the conversation between him and the dispatch desk relatively private. Nobody can tune in and overhear a cell phone call, but they can hear communications sent over the radio waves.

After a quick building tour that includes a glimpse of the interview room and its two-way mirror, McConnon, Turpin and I head out on the road.

On the road

Like others in the workforce, MPs work eight-hour shifts. Unlike others, though, their schedules vary. Because 24-hour police protection is required, MPs switch hours on a monthly basis, working night shift for a month, then early morning, then the midday shift.

In addition to monitoring traffic, MPs commonly patrol certain areas like school buildings to "make sure all's on the up and up," said McConnon. Building checks include walking around the building and shaking doors to make certain they're locked.

Some MP units have special duties. The No. 2 patrol (they number themselves) inspects off-post housing areas. There are nine off-post patrol areas in Vilseck and MP patrols let residents know they are under the Army's protection. Another special duty falls to the late-night shift. At 3 a.m. these MPs file the road condition report which indicates – in winter months – whether local schools will be open, delayed or cancelled.

McConnon said it's important to establish good relations with the public.

"I work for these people here," he said. "I want to get to know them."



Spc. David McConnon and Ohio National Guardsman Spc. Lucas Turpin approach a vehicle pulled over for doing 45 kph in a 30 kph zone.



MP desk sergeant Staff Sgt. LeJohn Washington, left, answers a question about paperwork submitted by Sgt. Joshua Wasserman.



The MP brassard is distinctive; the equipment belt is heavy.



Military Police are vigilant about keeping an eye on the roads of every Army installation.

Agreeing, Turpin said "Police work is a lot of public relations."

Both said they felt they serve as role models to citizens, especially to kids.

"Too often television exaggerates and plays up a police officer's duties, and they're portrayed in a negative way. Being a police officer is something you have to be born with. It's common sense, an ability to see things, and talk to people on a personal level," McConnon said.

During this day in their life, there weren't any gut-wrenching, dangerous activities. They pulled over a couple speeders which allowed me to see them in action.

When asked about the abiding love cops have for coffee and doughnuts, McConnon laughed and said he opts for hot chocolate and a twinkie.

"When you're out there for eight hours, everyone's gotta stop for a snack," he said in defense of his profession.



McConnon and Turpin fill out a traffic ticket in their MP vehicle.

Binge drinking: Redeploying Soldiers need to be cautious

by Patricia Johnson
USAG Franconia Alcohol/Drug Control Officer

There’s an alarming trend of binge drinking by Soldiers returning from deployments. The devastating consequences of alcohol poisoning as a result of binge drinking recently reverberated through all European military communities with the Christmas Day death of a 19-year-old Kitzingen Soldier.

Although the cause of death remains under investigation, preliminary findings indicate alcohol poisoning.

Binge drinking is drinking large quantities of alcohol in a short period of time with the goal of getting drunk fast. Binge drinking is especially dangerous for redeploying Soldiers who for the past year have had limited access to alcohol. Their tolerance is lower and they cannot drink as much alcohol as before they deployed.

Ken McMillan, a USAG Franconia substance abuse program prevention coordinator, says that often after returning from downrange some Soldiers immediately attempt to drink like they did before they deployed. This is where the trouble starts.

Alcohol is a sedative drug – “a downer”- that when drank to excess can cause a person to pass out. The usual inclination is to put the Soldier to bed and let them “sleep it off” with minimal or no supervision. Though the person may appear to be sleeping, their blood alcohol level is still rising because most of the alcohol hasn’t yet made it through their system.

Many Soldiers understand that placing an intoxicated Soldier on his or her side might prevent them from choking on their own vomit. However, many Soldiers may not realize that one symptom of alcohol poisoning is unconsciousness or semi-consciousness. A Soldier could slip into a coma and die as the excessive alcohol slows and then stops their breathing and their heart beat.

There have been situations in which Soldiers have drank to the extent of collapsing either inside an establishment or outside on the ground. Either of these situations could have devastating results. In addition to developing alcohol poisoning, the Soldier could experience hypothermia when the body is incapable of replacing heat lost due to the environment. This can occur when a Soldier passes out inside a building on a cold floor or outside on the ground.

First aid for the passed out person is simple, but requires vigilance. Stay with them, do not leave them alone. Position them on their right side, with their head turned to the side in case of vomiting (see picture). If the person is not breathing or is unresponsive, call for assistance. Begin CPR until they respond or until help arrives.

“I would not want to tell a family member that their child died on Christmas from drinking too much after having spent 12 months safely in a war zone,” Kate Barraco, a newly arrived substance abuse prevention coordinator, said.

Don’t be afraid to seek medical help for someone who has had too much to drink. You may save a life and prevent another needless tragedy from occurring for our Soldiers who have safely returned from down range.



Assume the proper recovery position when you’ve had too much to drink.

Reggae comes to The Zone in Hohenfels



Courtesy Photo

A free reggae concert featuring the alluring Luna Angel, above, takes place at The Zone in Hohenfels Feb. 10 at 7 p.m. Luna Angel (her birth name) was born in 1981 to a Jamaican mother and a French father in Marin County, Calif. Music is Angel’s heritage. Her uncle, Junior Marvin, was lead guitarist for the legendary Bob Marley’s Wailers band, and he was a huge mentor in early stages of her career. When 16, Angel flew to Kingston, Jamaica, to complete her first recordings with her uncle. She was 19 when she joined her first band, The I-Rise Band. She later moved to the Bay Area and attended Berkeley Jazz School. Luna has opened for major reggae acts, including The Wailers at legendary Fillmore Hall in San Francisco, and Alpha Blondy, Toots and the Maytals, Third World, Buju Banton and Michael Franti. In 2002, Angel performed at California’s largest Reggae festival, Reggae on the River. Angel’s debut album, “Move With Me,” has elements of reggae, R&B, jazz, and a bit of dancehall. Some of the tunes were composed during her mid-teens. To learn more, visit Luna Angel’s website: www.lunaangel.com

Army salutes record-breaking pilot Yeager

Army News Service

Although retired from the Air Force, military legend Brig. Gen. Charles “Chuck” Yeager personally expressed his appreciation for the recognition he received under the U.S. Army’s Freedom Team Salute program recently.

“I spent half of my life in the Army,” said Yeager at a Freedom Team Salute pinning ceremony, alluding to his service in the Army Air Corps. Yeager, aviation pioneer and test pilot, was recognized with the Army Freedom Team Salute commendation during the Safari Club International convention.

John P. McLaurin, deputy assistant secretary of the Army for Manpower and Reserve Affairs, presented the Freedom Team Salute commendation and pin.

“It is my pleasure to honor a man whose outstanding deeds contributed to the scientific understanding of aviation,” said McLaurin. “And, as an Army veteran, we appreciate Gen. Yeager’s outstanding service to the Nation.”

Yeager began his military career in the U.S. Army Air Corps and is recognized worldwide as the first person to break the sound barrier in 1947. Yeager retired from the Air Force in 1957, but continued to perform outstanding feats of airmanship. On



U.S. Air Force

Gen. Chuck Yeager pilots his last mission in 1997. He is credited with breaking the sound barrier 50 years earlier.

also to honor a true patriot,” said Col. Bruce Kramme, Freedom Team Salute director. Kramme served as master of ceremonies for the pinning and commendation presentation.

“It’s the Army’s way of saying thanks, not only to its veterans, but those who support them in our mission every day,” Kramme said.

Those interested in learning more about this recognition program, providing feedback, or signing up as an Ambassador are encouraged to visit www.freedomteamsalute.army.mil or e-mail freedomteamsalute@hqda.army.mil

Oct. 14, 1997 at the age of 74, he piloted an F-15 fighter through the sound barrier on his last official flight.

Freedom Team Salute commendations include a certificate of appreciation and personalized letter of thanks from the secretary of the Army and Army chief of staff, as well as an official U.S. Army pin and decal. The mission of the program is to strengthen the Army community by honoring veterans and by providing Active, Guard and Reserve Soldiers the opportunity to recognize those who support them.

“This was an opportunity to not only promote a very important Army recognition program, but

Pakistani-American Soldier guest at State of Union

by Sgt. Kenneth Hall
Army News Service

“Our men and women in uniform are making sacrifices,” said President George W. Bush during his State of the Union address Jan. 31, and listening intently from the balcony with First Lady Laura Bush was wounded-in-action Soldier Sgt. Wasim Khan

Khan, a native of Gilgat, Pakistan, is a patient at Walter Reed Army Medical Center. Khan was wounded in Iraq while serving with the 1st Armored Division. He was a special guest at the State of the Union, nominated to attend by the Secretary of the Army.

“I got to meet both President Bush and Mrs. Bush after the address,” said Khan. “They thanked me for my service and for coming and I told them it was an honor and a privilege to see them.”

Kahn said he used to watch this annual speech on TV, but this time he was personally there, and it was a once-in-a-lifetime experience.

“I got to see senators and congressmen who

had visited me and other troops at Walter Reed and it gave me the chance to thank them personally for showing their support for the troops,” said Khan.

“It was wonderful to see how the American people support us,” he said. “I hope they keep doing what they think is right for the country and right for the world. We have a lot of work ahead of us.”

A journey begins

After completing a bachelor’s degree in physics and math from Islamabad College for Boys, 21-year-old Khan immigrated to the U.S. in 1997. Not long after his arrival, he took advantage of an opportunity that was a lifetime in the making.

“I always wanted to join the Army,” said Khan. “I liked the way the Army conducted its business, most of the time being on the ground, fighting face-to-face. It was my wish to become an Army Soldier.”

Khan attended basic training in Fort Sill,

Okl., in 1998. His first duty station was at Fort Campbell, Ky. He went on to Giessen, Germany, and was assigned to a field artillery battalion in the 1st Armored Division. While deployed to Iraq, he was wounded by a rocket-propelled grenade attack in June 2003.

Khan has undergone more than 20 surgeries to repair wounds from the RPG attack which nearly took his life.

Holding the course

“The doctors, the civilian staff and the people at Walter Reed have been most supportive to me,” Khan said. “I’ve been through a lot of surgeries because I have many shrapnel wounds. Most of my right leg was severely injured, and my right femur was broken.”

Khan achieved U.S. citizenship as part of the U.S. military’s time-in-service benefit in September 2003. On April 19, 2005, he was honored for his courage and sacrifices with the Medallion of Honor at the 2005 American Veterans Disabled for Life Awards Gala in New York City.

Kahn will have one more surgery in March and is optimistic about his rehabilitation and recovery.

“I think it will be my last surgery and hopefully I will get released 60-70 percent recovered,” said Khan. “Things my father told me while growing up really helped me a lot to get through the rehabilitation time. My father always told me ‘never quit’ and ‘be the best’ and you’ll have ups and downs in life but just keep moving forward and do good things and be remembered for the good things you did.”



President Bush delivers the State of the Union address Jan. 31.

Czech Magic

Enduring Prague entices with magnificence, mystique

Story and photos

by Alice Adler

Bavarian Times

If you ache to travel and want see one of Europe's grandest cities, consider a long weekend in Prague.

About a three-hour drive from anywhere within USAG Grafenwoehr, Prague is worth a visit. This grand capitol of the Czech Republic has something for everyone: historians, artists, party animals and shoppers.

Prague Castle, a huge hilltop complex of houses, churches and monuments, dominates the city. Most prominent is the grandly gothic St. Vitus Cathedral. This house of worship boasts 21 ornate side chapels and stunning stained glass windows.

Be sure to check out the cathedral's exterior. The façade is decorated with statues of saints and beautiful bronze doors with relief work depicting the construction of the Cathedral. The back of the cathedral is impressive with an intricate network of flying buttresses.

After circling the cathedral, wander through the buildings of Castle Hill. Bring a guidebook that explains the historic places you will pass.

After Castle Hill, walk down one of the long sets of stairs and make your way to Charles Bridge. One of many bridges spanning the Vltava River, the Charles Bridge is by far the best known and most visited sight in Prague.

This 1,700-foot pedestrian walkway is known for two things that line its walls. First is the 30 statues along both sides of this celebrated bridge. The statues mainly depict saints and religious figures, and saints both famous and unknown are represented here. St. John the Baptist and Saint Wenceslas are alongside lesser known Saint Lutgarde and Saint Adalbert.

The other attraction along the bridge is the many artisans and musicians that congregate here daily. Paintings and drawings, handmade jewelry, pottery and other craft items are for sale on both sides of this ancient path.

Note: Return to the Charles Bridge at night, after the salesmen have gone. The Cathedral on Castle Hill remains lit until midnight, making Charles Bridge a wonderful post-dinner stroll.

After crossing Charles Bridge, head for Old Town Square. The square is surrounded by beautiful baroque buildings, churches and boasts numerous cafes. Stop for coffee and gaze around one of the most beautiful town squares in Europe.

One of the most popular sights in Prague is in Old Town Square – the Astronomical Clock, an amazing scientific instrument to behold. Extremely complex and built in 1410, the clock does not actually show the time. Its many dials and hands show phases of the moon, the seasons, the date, the equinoxes and various Christian holy days. Twice a day, at 8 a.m. and 8 p.m., the clock chimes and its glockenspiel kicks into action, displaying a morality play with the 12 Apostles sliding by as figures depicting greed, death, vanity and corruption dance below.

A history buff will want to visit some of the oldest sights in European Jewish history. The Old-New Synagogue, built in 1270, is Europe's oldest Jewish house of worship. It is still in use today, more than 700 years later.

Across the street from the synagogue is the darkly beautiful Old Jewish Cemetery, one of the world's most crowded burial grounds. In the 15th century, laws did not allow Prague's Jewish population much room to bury their dead, so graves were dug to accommodate 12 bodies vertically. The gravestones were crowded together on the surface, one in front of another, resulting in a sea of gravestones that serve as a stark reminder of the long, hard history of Jews in Europe.

Shoppers will certainly not be disappointed in Prague. Local artisans turn out beautiful works of all kinds. Pottery, paintings and other pieces of art can be purchased from street-side vendors as well as at upscale galleries. Deep red garnets, a semiprecious stone mined in the Czech Republic, are sold at every turn in every conceivable kind of jewelry. Some of the world's finest crystal and glassware glitters in well-lit store windows.

If nightlife is what you seek, Prague delivers. Upscale dining, smoky bars, pulsing nightclubs, and classical concerts are available nearly every night of the week.

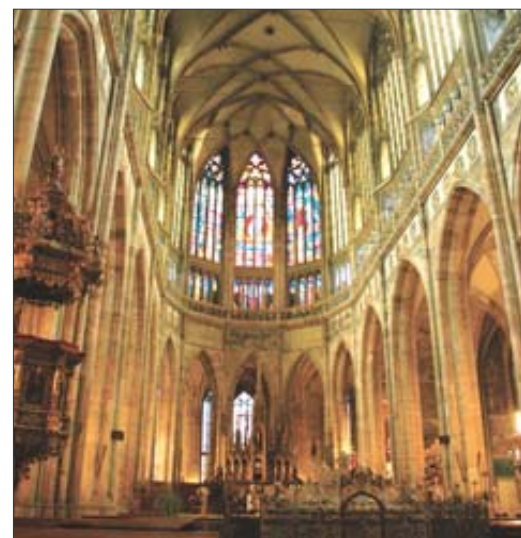
Prague is a truly international city, and as you amble through the theaters, bars and clubs, the multilingual babble of visitors from around the globe will often astound.

No matter why you visit Prague – history, art, nightlife – you simply must experience the most enchanting activity the city has to offer. Put away your map and guidebook and – get lost.

That's right. Wander the labyrinths of twisting alleyways and convoluted side streets. Every turn will bring you face-to-face with stunning architecture, cute shops, quaint restaurants and hundreds of years of history. A few hours wandering the back streets of Prague is truly an experience that will not be forgotten.



The Charles Bridge is one of the most visited sites in Prague.



The ornate interior of St. Vitus Cathedral is stunning to behold.



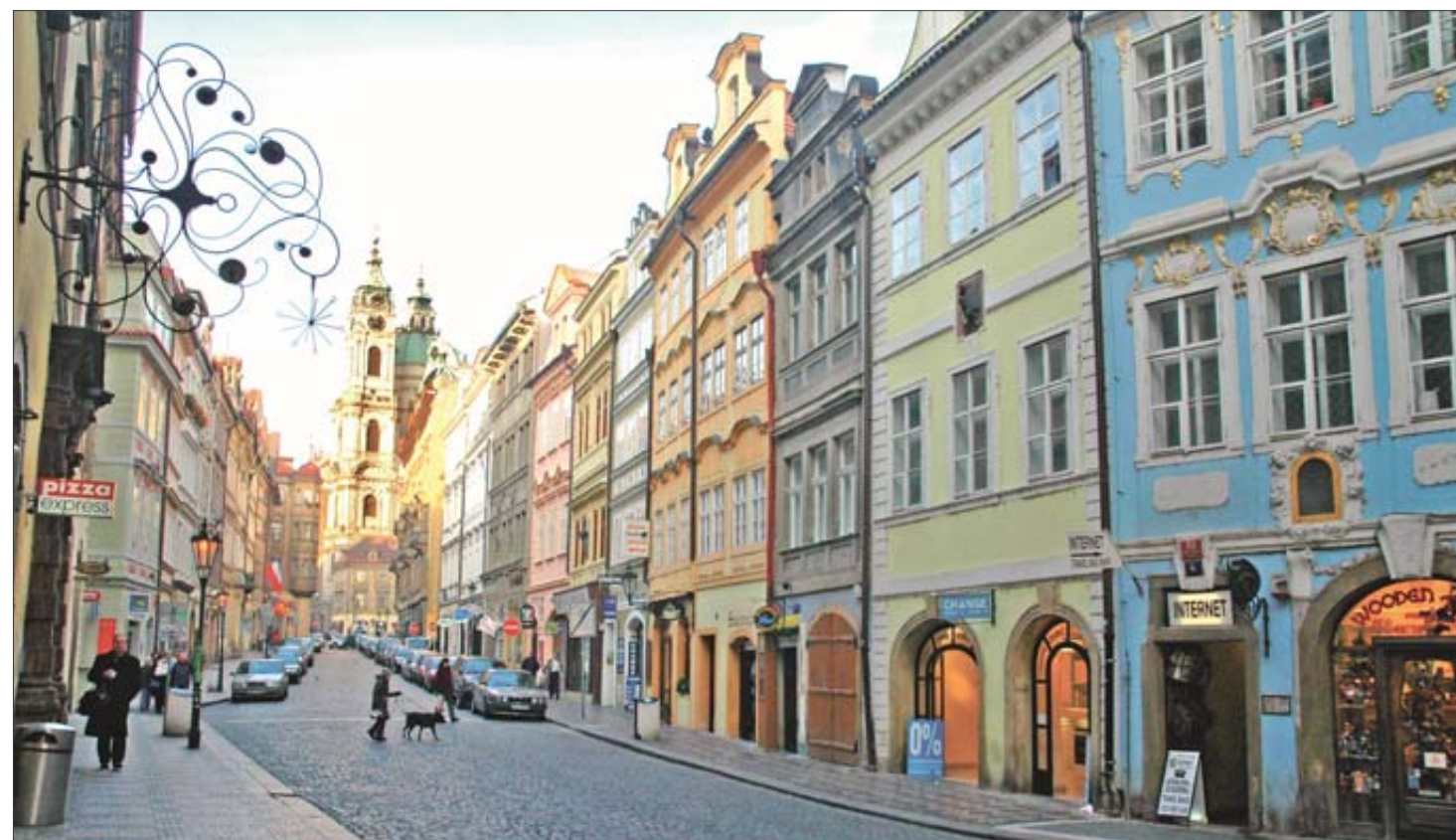
Charles Bridge offers an ideal view of St. Vitus Cathedral on Castle Hill.



The darkly beautiful Jewish Cemetery is one of the world's most crowded burial grounds.



The Astronomical Clock in Old Town Square show everything but the time.



The colorful, winding streets of Prague are a great place to get lost.

German Culture 101

A new look at some German humor

by Martina Bias
Bavarian News

Groucho Marx once said that the thinnest books in the world are the ones on edible British cooking and those on German humor.

While I can't comment on British food, for a lack of expertise, I have to vehemently disagree on his take of German humor.

While most Americans might see Germans as "all work and no play," I must point out that we certainly do have a sense of humor, but often a different sense of time as to when to use it.

The present time of the year, called Karneval, Fasching or Fastnacht (similar to Mardi Gras), is when German humor is openly displayed and celebrated. Floats in the many Fasching parades poke fun at politicians and recent events. At big Fasching celebrations, the so-called "Buettenredner" dress up in funny costumes and address topics and problems in society in rhyming verses that deliver one pun after another. The act is deliberately underscored by punctuated fanfare choruses played by a background orchestra. However, although everyone is laughing (even the person that is made fun of) the undertone can be quite serious.

Most German humor contains cultural references and word plays and is often delivered in "Umgangssprache" (relating language) and dialect where neutral terms can be replaced with emotionally charged expressions.

There's no doubt German humor is different and unique. While I realize that humor does not translate well, I will still give you a few examples of what Germans consider funny. Here are a couple sayings that convey the German sense of humor:

"Lieber a Laus im Kraut, als gar ka Fleisch" (Translation: It's better to find a louse in the cabbage, then to have no meat to eat at all)

"Wo die Liebe hiefaellt, da bleibts liga, und wenn's auf'n Mis-thaufen is" (Translation: Where love falls, there it will stay, even if it is on the top of a heap of manure)

Traditionally, most German humorists were political satirists, but there were always others like the classical pranksters of the 1920s, Bavarians Karl Valentin and Liesl Karlstadt. Heinz Erhardt displayed a very 50s sense of jovial and grandfatherly humor in countless movies made during the 60s and 70s. This is one of his most famous jokes in rhyme form:



Fasching is called Germany's "silly season." And it's not difficult to see why.

*Die alten Zaehne waren schlecht
Man begann sie rauszureissen
Die Neuen kamen gerade recht
Um damit ins Gras zu beissen*

Translation:

*The old teeth were bad
We started to pull them out
The new ones came just in time
To bite into the grass with them*

("bite into the gras" is a German term meaning "to die")

Another classic German comedian is Lorient who might be considered a bit like a German version of Peter Sellers in his live skits. In the '90s, the TV station RTL started a German copy of Saturday Night Live and launched careers of quite a few younger comedians.

The most recent trend in German humor mirrors the changing demographics as several comedians of Turkish origin have emerged and successfully joke about growing up as a foreigner in small-town Germany and the battles with small minds that it entails.

Nevertheless, many German comedians and entertainers remain on the fringes. Some had to learn the hard way how far they are allowed to go with their jokes. Stefan Raab, for example, had to pay €70,000 in "damages" to a 16-year-old beauty queen because of the crude jokes he had made about her name during his show. The young lady's name is Lisa Loch, and "Loch" is the German word for "hole". He had to pay even more €150,000 when he showed a photo of a young mother and her daughter holding the big "Schultuete" (cone shaped goody bag) on the girl's first day of school and commented: "The dealers are getting better and better with their disguises."

There is, however, one comedian who seems to be able to get away with whatever he wants to say. His name is Harald Schmidt and he has the cult status of Jay Leno with his late night show. Harald Schmidt had retired from his show after eight years in 2003, but only one year after that was persuaded (by the lure of an extraordinary high paycheck) to return to his adoring fans.

So you see, humor is alive and well in Germany. However, keep in mind that every person, every language, and every culture has a different sense of humor, and that of your German friends and neighbors probably differs a little from yours.

Fortunately for all of us, a smile means the same all over the world.

German Cooking 101

Amberg home to world's biggest 'Dotsch'

Did you know that the city of Amberg is mentioned in the Guinness Book of World Records? Well, everyone around here knows and they are proud of the fact that in 1997, the biggest "Dotsch" in the world was baked here.

"Dotsch" is the regional variation of the potato pancake. A little further up north, in Franconia, you might find it being called "Detsch"; further down south, it is known as Reiberdatschi. The "official" German name is Kartoffelpuffer.

Depending on their age, some Germans can see potato pancakes as homey comfort food or

might consider it "the bread of poverty and deprivation".

The way German and Americans eat their potato pancakes differs quite a bit. I still remember the time my husband had his first "Detsch" at my family's house. We were setting the table and when my husband saw the potato pancakes being served, he grabbed the salt and pepper shakers and the ketchup bottle. The look on my family's faces at his choice of condiments was probably just as surprised and shocked as his facial expression when he noticed that we were spreading apple sauce on our potato pancakes.

The preparation of potato pancakes in a German kitchen can vary. My mother still grates the potatoes by hand on the big grater my grandma used. The modern housewife will use her kitchen machine. However you chose to achieve the potatoes consistency, please make sure it has a fine texture and is not just shredded like the American version, Latkes.

Even the finest grater on my kitchen machine leaves the potatoes too stringy, so I process them again combined with all the other batter ingredients in my blender to achieve the smooth consistency I desire. If you don't mind shopping on the economy and want a fuss-free preparation, give the "Shortcut Dotsch" recipe below a try. It uses refrigerated, purchased potato dumpling dough.

Serve the Kartoffelpuffer the German way with apple sauce, other fruit compotes, a sprinkling of sugar, or maybe a little sour cream. And if you can't resist to bring out the ketchup, that's okay. I promise, I won't tell!

Guten Appetit!



Kartoffelpuffer

Ingredients:

- ca. 2 pounds potatoes (about 6 medium)
- 3 tbs. sour cream
- 1 egg
- 3 tbs. flour
- ½ tsp. salt
- 1 small onion, finely grated (optional)
- oil for frying

Directions:

Peel potatoes and quickly grate in kitchen machine. Mix immediately with sour cream in a large bowl. (the sour cream prevents the unsightly browning of the grated potatoes). Add egg and mix well. Slowly add flour, salt and grated onion, if desired.

Heat a few tsp. of oil in a non-stick pan. Spread about ½ cup of batter in pan and flatten as thin as possible with the back of a spoon. Cook until nicely browned and crispy on each side. Add more oil to the pan as needed for additional Kartoffelpuffer.

Yield: 8 – 10 Kartoffelpuffer.

Shortcut Dotsch

Ingredients:

- 2 eggs
- ½ cup plain yoghurt or sour cream
- 1 cup milk
- ½ tsp. salt
- ¼ tsp. pepper
- 1 Package refrigerated "Knoedelteig" or "Klossteig" (750 g)
- oil for frying

Directions:

In a medium bowl, whisk the first 5 ingredients. Add potato dough and blend well.

Heat a little oil in a non-stick frying pan. Pour about ½ cup of batter in pan and spread to flatten as thin as possible. Cook until crispy and golden brown on both sides.

Yield: about one dozen Dotsch

NOTE: Do you have a favorite German dish you would like to recreate at home? E-mail your request to martina.bias@us.army.mil and your recipe might be featured in a future issue of the Bavarian News.



The German Kartoffelpuffer (potato pancake) is a delicacy normally served with applesauce and sour cream, not ketchup as most Americans usually think.

Vilseck hosts HS wrestlers

by Kathy Jordan
Bavarian News

Wrestling matches at Vilseck High School Jan. 21 pitted grapplers from six schools competing for glory in their various weight classes. Host Vilseck placed fifth overall in the team competition.

Match results by weight class:

103 – 1. James Ricks – Patch, 2. Tyler Yanik – Ansbach

112 – 1. Jarrod Branch – Patch, 2. Jordan Reis – Ansbach

119 – 1. Nicholas Rogers – Patch, 2. Kyle Ragey – Patch, 3. Jose Leon – Vilseck, 4. Martin Fucs – Hohenfels

125 – 1. Chris Peterson – Hohenfels, 2. Daniel Taylor – Patch, 3. Jacob Guiets – Vilseck, 4. Mike Brady – Patch

130 – 1. Nathan Buckley – Patch, 2. Mark Caples-Hohenfels, 3. Daniel Roberts – Ansbach, 4. John Swanson – Ansbach, 5. Chris Oppliger – Patch

135 – 1. Daniel Herring – Bamberg, 2. Allen Sligh – Vilseck, 3. Thomas Graham – Ansbach, 4. Nik Locum – Kaiserslautern, 5. Ryan Closes – Patch, 6. Paul Maritz -Bamberg

140 – 1. Chris Lucyski – Kaiserslautern, 2. Stephen Vandal – Hohenfels, 3. Lucas Roberts – Ansbach, 4. Zach Page – Patch, 5. David Ferrier – Vilseck

145 – 1. Dameon Odum – Hohenfels, 2. Adam Worrel – Bamberg, 3. Andrew Bessler – Patch, 4. Jason Lopez – Kaiserslautern, 5. Michail Legaspi – Patch

152 – 1. Michael Funes – Kaiserslautern, 2. Adam Harper Kaiserslautern, 3. Alex Orona – Hohenfels, 4. Randy Bowker – Patch, 5. Brian Chae – Patch

160 – 1. Eric Vandal – Hohenfels, 2. David Zumbach – Ansbach, 3. Kevin Greir – Vilseck, 4. David Green – Kaiserslautern, 5. Matt Karr – Patch

189 – 1. Madison Hayes – Kaiserslautern, 2. Michael Beuckens – Patch, 3. Riley Livingston – Bamberg, 4. Brad Bergfeld – Patch, 5. Chris Jackson – Vilseck

275 – 1. Brian Bowles – Patch, 2. Troy Price – Kaiserslautern, 3. Brian Taylor – Patch, 4. Sasha Chavez – Kaiserslautern, 5. Michael Dickmeyer – Patch.

Team results: Patch claimed first place, followed by Hohenfels and Kaiserslautern.

In the middle school wrestling competition, Vilseck results were: Joe Hall won 3 and lost 1, Gabrielle Owens won 1 and lost 2, and Mike Vacinti lost three tough matches.



Kathy Jordan(2)

Vilseck's Kevin Grier is in the grips of Ansbach's David Zumbach.



Vilseck middle schooler Gabrielle Owens and Hohenfels' Blake Bushee square off.

On the slopes



Jackie Rabie (4)

Nick Munoz apparently has a good feeling as he gets a feel for the snow under his skis.



Andria Odom learns how to maneuver without the use of ski poles.



Emily Richardson and Maria Ogas stretch their upper bodies as they prepare for a day of intense skiing instruction.

Vilseck students advance skiing skills

by Jackie Rabie
Vilseck Elementary School

Thirty-two fourth-, fifth- and sixth-grade Vilseck Elementary School students hit the slopes of the Ochsenkopf ski area Jan. 19-20.

Co-sponsored by the Student Council and the Adventure Club, beginning skiers spent two days in ski lessons provided by a team of instructors from Vilseck Outdoor Recreation.

The student skiers learned all the basics – from how to carry skis to walking in skis and finally turning and stopping. By the end of the second day, skiers who were so nervous the day before were cruising down the mountain screaming with joy.

The advanced skiers in the group took the two days to practice their technique and ski some of the more advanced runs at Ochsenkopf.

The most popular question students asked at the end of the two days was, “Can we go on another ski trip?” Apparently they all enjoyed the thrills of the hills.



Ski instructor Werner Prietv, left, demonstrates a weight shift move as Caitlin Berry, Meagan White, Michael Cook and instructor Jenny Laurendine look on.

Graf hosts G-A soccer tourney

by Shannon Hill
Bavarian News

Local sports enthusiasts figured out how to kick the winter doldrums in a healthy, exciting way – playing indoor soccer.

Grafenwoehr Field House recently played host of the 12th annual German-American Indoor Soccer Tournament. Nineteen teams of 10 players each competed over three qualifying weekends with the top two teams from each weekend competing in the Soccer Super Bowl played Feb. 4 (results not available at press time).

A round-robin format, tournament play has five players on court, including the goalkeeper. Points are awarded for wins, losses, ties, and goals scored. For each win, a team receives two points, unless it was a shutout, in which the winning team receives three points. One point is awarded to both teams in the event of a tie, and one point is awarded for each goal scored. The two teams with the highest point total advanced to the Super Bowl.

An American team from Hohenfels was coached by Santos Rivera. The team had a difficult, but fun time. They had only been together three days before the tournament started, and lacked the preparation time of other teams.

“It’s a challenge,” said 14-year-old keeper Loisann Delass, “but that’s how you get better.”

After the tournament, all competitors were invited to a buffet and to receive team and individual trophies.



Shannon Hill

Competitors at the 12th Annual indoor soccer tournament hosted by the Grafenwoehr Field House square off for the kickoff following a point scored.

Skiers, snowboarders vie for U.S. Forces titles

by Victoria Palmer
IMA-EURO MWR

Skiers and snowboarders from throughout Europe will vie for medals in the 2006 Jeep Ski and Snowboard U.S. Forces Championship at the Hausberg Ski Area in Garmisch March 11 and 12.

The championship will feature competition in alpine ski slalom and giant slalom, and snowboard giant slalom events, in racer, professional and youth classifications. The event is open to all U.S. ID-cardholder military men and

women, civilians and family members age six and up.

Entrants in the adult racer class will compete in active duty or civilian divisions, in men’s or women’s open (age 18-29), senior (age 30-39) or master’s (age 40 and up.) Skiers earning local commander cup points for their unit must be entered in this class.

Youth class skiers age six to 17 will compete in boy’s or girls minor (age six to nine), junior (age 10 to 12), and senior (age 13 to 17) categories. Youth skiers will race on the same course

as the adults and must have the ability to control their speed and turns on the steep hills of ‘blue’ runs. Race organizers said that helmets are highly recommended for all youth skiers.

Professional class skiers are civilian ID-cardholders who are associated with providing ski or snowboard related services—such as instructor, trip guide, and ski patrol—on a paid, compensated or volunteer basis.

Active duty military with professional credentials may compete in the racer class.

There is no entry fee for participation in the

racing events.

Registration forms are available at Army Morale, Welfare and Recreation outdoor recreation centers or online at www.mwr-europe.com. Pre-registration ends March 8.

For more information, contact Wiesbaden Outdoor Recreation at DSN 377-5760 or go online to www.mwr-europe.com.

The 2006 Jeep Ski and Snowboard U.S. Forces Europe Championship is hosted by Installation Management Agency-Europe Morale, Welfare and Recreation.